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ART. XIX.—*Eighteen Hundred and Twenty, a Poem. Part First.* London, 1821.

THE design of this production will be best learned from a few sentences of the preface, which we the rather extract, as they contain an allusion, kept up indeed through many parts of the poem, to our own country.

‘ The title of this poem is intended to connect it with the political events of the year eighteen hundred and twenty. It has not been my object, however, to take them up in chronological order, or present them in an historical shape, but merely to allude to them in any way that appeared most suitable for relieving the monotony of a poem, essentially didactic. I shall also employ, for the same purpose, in the course of the work, should it be continued, the events of subsequent and preceding years ; so that the name I have affixed to the poem is not an accurate description of the subject, but a mere title.

‘ The prevailing error of the last generation, in theory and practice, was an abuse of the name and principles of liberty. The fault, or at least, one of the faults of the present, is of a contrary description, and consists in misrepresenting in theory and abusing in practice, the wholesome doctrine, that it is the duty of the people to preserve good order and submit to lawful authority. From this indisputable truth, a certain class of writers have deduced the conclusion, that it is necessary to submit to any established authority, however unlawful and unjust, or in other words, have revived the old-fashioned doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. They have gone, however, a step beyond the ancient partisans of divine right : and, while they deny to nations the liberty of reforming their governments, they grant to kings, not only an unlimited authority over their own subjects, but a right to reform the governments of foreign powers at pleasure. This system, however absurd, may be regarded as the one now prevailing on the continent. * * * * *

‘ It is true that these slavish principles have comparatively few partisans in England and the United States, where this poem will circulate, if at all : but I have thought that even in these countries an attempt to expose their absurdity might not be wholly useless, for the promotion of truth.

‘ In the execution of the following attempt I have not overlooked the principle that poetry addresses itself to the imagination rather than the judgment, and have endeavored to enliven the dulness of discussion, as far as was compatible with the nature of the subject and the mediocrity of talent at my disposal. Without

pretending to vie with the living masters of the lyre, in brilliancy and romantic interest, I shall be satisfied, if the lovers of verse shall consider an inferiority of this sort as, in some degree, compensated by just views and generous feelings. Nothing, however, can expiate in poetry the sin of absolute dulness; and if the public award pronounces that I have been guilty of it, I shall certainly refrain from repeating the offence. If this attempt is received with approbation, I shall probably continue the poem to a third or fourth part.'

The foregoing extracts from the preface will sufficiently convey to our readers an idea of the spirit and principles of this poem. These it is no part of our design to discuss. The great unanimity, with which these principles in substance are embraced in our own country, would render such discussion here superfluous; and our remoteness from Europe, where they constitute the great *shibboleth* of the powerful parties there in array, destroys the temptation we might otherwise feel, to engage in the subject. The same cause will perhaps lead some American readers to think, that the anonymous author of *Eighteen Hundred and Twenty*, whom we have some suspicions to be an American, has entered into the controversy with disproportioned warmth. This is an opinion, which we are apt in this country to form with regard to the champions in the political contests of Europe; and it is happy for us, that the great warfare there waged is a matter of no more pressing interest to America. But we ought not to do injustice to either of the parties in that warfare. The conflict is one of tremendous moment. The antiquity of the prescriptions and the power and patronage of the privileged classes, that exist in virtue of them, on the one hand, with the numerical and physical strength, the commercial resources, the activity and intelligence of the mass of the people, on the other, are elements too mighty not to kindle a fearful strife. The short experience of our own country has been sufficient to teach us, that political discussions may be wrought to wonderful bitterness, even by good men. But our domestic politics, entirely controlled as they are at every moment, by the numerical majority, consisting as they chiefly do of questions of deputing offices, which on the return of short periods are resumed by the people, ought never to excite that fierceness of feeling, which grows out of the momentous struggle at which we have hinted. We know not whether this apology will be thought necessary

for any of the opinions of this work : but if in any portion, or in its general spirit, it may go beyond the feeling of the American community on the subjects treated, we would suggest the foregoing explanation. The poem begins with an animated apostrophe to Spain. The following passage will serve as a specimen of this portion of the work ; at the same time that it discloses interesting facts relative to that unfortunate country.

' 'Tis glorious all—but what avail
The gifts of God when man their use denies ?
What serves the port, when scarce a sail
For Spanish profit bears its merchandise ?
The stream, that only pours to waste
Its wealth of waves upon uncultured banks ?
The generous grape that none may taste,
Whose toilsome care has trimmed its cluster'd ranks ?
The famous towns, where Ruin builds his throne,
On broken shafts, and crumbling architraves ;
The perfumed airs, that sigh for glory gone,
Or that unclouded sun that beams for none but slaves.

' Slaves—but beneath that galling chain
The soul of freedom still abides in you ;
Slaves—but in Europe's hour of shame and pain,
Ye did what freer nations could not do :
When o'er your land the invader's forces poured,
And garrisoned each town and castled height,
And your base masters owned him for their lord ;
'Twas then the Spanish people in their might
Rose up unanimous—Forth legions sprang
As at a signal call, and armor rang,
And trumpets sounded—standards flamed in air,
And Hope exulting waved her golden hair,

' Where terror reigned so late—and on they move,
And back dismayed the astonished tyrant drove ;
Shook to its base that blood-cemented throne,
And placed their rightful monarch on his own,
While peace returned to Europe. What reward ?
What wealth, what titles grants their grateful lord,
To pay such service ? Doubtless high in courts,
Doubtless in palaces, the proud resorts
Of self-styled nobles—doubtless at the head
Of the brave troops they late to victory led
And glory—doubtless on the cushioned seats
Of ermined justice—or in soft retreats.

‘ Of pensioned ease the royal gratitude
Placed your deliverers.—This was all he could ;
And less were mockery. Idle boast !
Ask the south winds that sweep the embattled coast
Of Africa, and bear from Ceuta’s towers
The prisoner’s moan that counts the lingering hours,
And longs for death to ease him—They shall tell
Another story. Seek the deepest cell
In Spain’s most loathsome dungeon, ye shall find,
Lodged in such state as that, the godlike mind,
The heart that poured like water out its flood
In the king’s service. Mark the felon brood,
‘ That chained in gallies tug the laboring oar,
Till the blood starts from every bursting pore ;
There toils the patriot. Such the glorious meed,
That pays his high intent, his matchless deed.
Aye—and I tell you when a ruffian’s hand
Plies the red scourge upon that outcast band,
His villain fury tears the bleeding form
Of Arguelles.* These are things, that warm
The blood of meek-eyed patience ; these are things
Which in its blackest record history brings
Nothing to be a match for—These are times
In which endurance is the worst of crimes.’

The passage which follows this, and which is intended to expose what may be called the *emigrant policy* lately pursued in Europe, is one of the most powerful in the poem, and one of those perhaps, for which the explanation made above will be most needed here. Our sympathies in this country are pretty generally, we think, on the side of the emigrants ; whereas, in Europe, experience has so universally found them so strongly on the side adverse to improvement, that their fortunes awaken less commiseration in the liberal party, than could be wished and indeed expected from those whose cause is in its essence the cause of humanity. The following pas-

* Arguelles was the most distinguished orator among the members of the Spanish cortes at their first organization ; and, as is well known, was honored by the enthusiastic admiration of his colleagues, with the appellation of *the divine*. Upon the king’s restoration he was brought to trial for his share in the preceding events ; but by the dexterity with which he managed his defence, he disconcerted his judges so much, that they found it extremely difficult to pronounce him guilty with any regard to appearances. The king, being informed that there was some delay and embarrassment in the case, sent for the papers and wrote upon them with his own hand—*Ten years labor in the gallies at Ceuta*.

sage at the close of this strain, will interest our readers for the national allusion :

But why such fears? And tell me, if thou wilt,
 Why youthful freedom still must wed with guilt?
 To Europe's history why each thought confine?
 Mark where afar in blameless lustre shine
 Columbia's stars along the Hesperian sky,
 And guide the march of struggling liberty.
 By her forewarned, Iberia, learn the skill
 To mix with prudent care your generous zeal;
 Like her to well-tried worth your cause entrust,
 And willing to be free, forget not to be just.
 So shall your realm erect in vigorous health,
 Revive once more to glory, joy, and wealth;
 Once more brown Labour's train prevent the morn,
 To trim the vine, or tend the golden corn;
 And o'er her looms reviving Art delight,
 With song and smile to charm the weary night;
 While at their call the freighted ships appear,
 And rich abundance crowns the industrious year.
 So shall your sons, a numerous, generous race,
 In times remote their fathers' deeds retrace,
 With honest pride these high exploits review,
 By zeal inspired, but still to justice true;
 And bless unanimous that patriot train,
 In ceaseless hymns that sound thro' grateful Spain.
 Eternal flowers shall blossom where they sleep,
 Fresh with the dews that worth and freedom weep;
 While deeply graved in history's brightest line,
 Their names with Washington's for ever shine.

To this succeeds the part of the poem, where the political system on which it is written, is more distinctly developed, and in which the grave and philosophical strain of most of the previous portion is exchanged for a vein of temperate pleasantry. The immediate suggestion of this part of the poem was found in the speech of the emperor of Austria, to the deputies of the Hungarian aristocracy, at their meeting at Pest, in 1820. In this speech the emperor says to the Hungarians, *totus mundus stultisat, et relictis antiquis legibus imaginarias constitutiones quærit. Vos habetis constitutionem, &c.* Our author's note upon this passage is as follows:—

‘A most gracious speech truly: and if the whole world do not immediately change their opinions and come round to his Majes-

ty's, the whole world will certainly exhibit a high degree of ingratitude, for the very civil and endearing manner in which His Majesty has condescended to point out their errors. *Delirat* would have been rather more classical, and a little less insulting than *stultisat*; but it is natural enough perhaps to express barbarous ideas in monkish Latin: and then the word *delirat* might have brought to mind a highly anti-monarchical passage in a classical poet of great authority.—*Quicquid delirant reges, &c.* If the whole world are of one opinion, and the emperor of Austria of another, supposing him even to be backed by the deputies of the Hungarian aristocracy, is there not reason to fear that His Majesty may ultimately be left in a minority? Some late accounts, however, seem to shew that the Huns are not quite so well satisfied with their political situation as the emperor seems to suppose. By the law of England an individual is not permitted to *stultify* himself. Might it not be made a question whether by the law of nations an emperor is at liberty to *stultify* the whole world? and whether a man, who pretends to *stultify* the whole world, is not in reality making a fool of himself?

Having indicated this topic in the foregoing note, our author's allusions in the following passage will be intelligible.

‘Vain questions all; your idle doubts renounce,
The German Cæsar solves the point at once.
Mark where, in lofty state, he mounts alone
The imperial, royal, apostolic throne;
While Pest assembled its due homage pays,
And Metternich and Gentz unite their praise.
There bold in truth he tells the tidings sad,
That *all mankind, except the Huns, are mad.*
The Huns—the enlightened Huns, alone remain,
One bright example to the insensate train,
In full possession of their reasoning powers,
Through every age from Attila’s to ours.

Come then, ye studious souls from every shore,
Who thirst and hunger for politic lore:
Ye that expend so long with fruitless toil
O’er Locke and Montesquieu the midnight oil;
Ye that with fond devotion love to trace
The written wisdom of an earlier race,
And hang enraptured o’er their living works,
Pitts—Foxes—Ameses—Mirabeaus—or Burkes.
And ye that hear with reverence and delight
Where equal genius now supports the right,
Where Mackintosh to generous ardour wrought,
From lips of honey pours his wealth of thought;

Constant with copious accents keen and free,
 Foils the vain arts of powerful sophistry ;
 And youthful zeal in warmth surviving yet,
 Inspires thy voice, Oh veteran La Fayette ;
 Or where Torenó with his bold compeers,
 Pleads the just cause to all unpractised ears ;
 Or fair Hesperia in her prosperous youth,
 Bears to the world full witness of its truth ;
 Come turn away from all these thoughts and scenes,
 For now a new and happier time begins.
 Past is the glory of all former names,
 Once prized at Washington, St Cloud, St James,
 And France and England must their weakness own,
 And yield the palm of science to the Hun.
 Then come, ye studious souls, set forth in haste,
 Quit the dull seats of all your labours past ;
 And fly where perfect wisdom stands confest,
 In living lessons daily taught at Pest.'

The remainder of the poem consists of an address in the person of Mr Gentz, the well known advocate and official organ of the doctrines, which it contains. Having named the press, as the great instrument of modern corruption, this address thus proceeds :

'Straight from this source supplied in copious stores,
 The flood of heresy and knowledge pours
 Through the wide world, and swells, and rushes on,
 Threatening dstruction to each lawful throne.
 Knowledge—the apple with our ruin fraught,
 Is now the cheapest fruit that can be bought ;
 And journals, loaded with their poisonous ware,
 Like leaves in autumn, flutter through the air.
 Each starveling printer holds his court supreme,
 And bids the sovereigns come and answer him ;
 And sovereigns must—Oh foulest shame of all !
 Yes, monarchs must, and do, obey the call.
 And yet their ministers regardless stand,
 While schools, like mushrooms, spring thro' all the land,
 Rising, in town and village, by the score,
 Till learning knocks at every peasant's door.
 And last, all hope of better things to efface,
 And poison in its germ the rising race,
 By the new scheme each youth instructs his brother,
 And pupils act as masters to each other.
 Then say what remedy the case can reach,
 When infants are not only taught, but teach ?

And is it not, when such disorders rule,
High time that parents put themselves to school?
What though de Bonald* deem the system naught,
Because it teaches better than it ought?
Think ye the less the youthful armies swell
And crowd the courts of Lancaster and Bell?
In vain La Mennais† proves by reasoning sooth,
That reason never proved a single truth:
The stupid world just takes him at his word,
And owns *his* truths, at least to be absurd.

Lastly: and this your majesties may call
Perhaps the most surprising point of all—
Nature herself appears to impart her force,
And plastic power to aid the infectious course.
For as the lower ranks by art and stealth
Gain ground so fast in knowledge and in wealth,
Their very numbers all account excell;
Their very corporal stature seems to swell.
While to our grief each glorious sovereign line,
The hope of nations, sinks in sad decline,
And scarce from age to age, with pain and care,
Succeeds, perhaps, in eking out an heir;
The rascal vulgar prove, untouched by shame,
Their limbs of iron, and their nerves of flame;
And hosts of children, swarming more and more,
Shew their white heads at every cottage door:
As erst the Jews, though crushed by Pharaoh's hand,
Waxed fast and mighty in the Egyptian land.

* The Viscount de Bonald is a voluminous French writer, who has acquired a good deal of authority with the aristocratic party on the continent by the determined pertinacity, with which he maintains the most absurd of their pretensions.

† 'The Abbé de la Mennais is a much better writer, though, if possible, a still more absurd reasoner, than the viscount de Bonald. In his work on *Indifference to Religion*, he establishes the infallibility of the pope by the following argument. There is no certainty in any of the information which we receive by means of the senses, of consciousness, or of reasoning; therefore, in order to be certain of any thing, we must have it on better authority than either of these; therefore the pope is infallible. The protestants are also of opinion, that in order to believe in the pope, it is necessary to dispute the evidence of sense and reason; but instead of denying with M. de la Mennais, the credibility of their eyes and ears, they preferred denying that of his holiness. It is a curious thing to see this learned and able advocate of the most superstitious form of the Christian religion resting his defence of its truth upon the basis of universal Pyrrhonism. His argument has not a shadow of plausibility, and is indeed only an empty parade of words without meaning: but if his premises were true, they would lead to a conclusion directly contrary to the point he is endeavoring to prove.'

In vain sage Malthus, provident too late,
Predicts the event, and tells the doom of fate ;
With eye unerring marks that hour of ill,
When tribes increasing the vast world shall fill ;
Exhaust at once the unequal stock of food,
Fish, flesh, and fowl—from forest, air, and flood,
And last on each green thing despairing prey,
Till plague and famine sweep them all away.
In vain in soft persuasion dips his pen,
To touch the unwary souls of thoughtless men ;
Calls beauty's bloom a false seducing show,
And love—sweet love—the source of all our woe ;
Cassandra-like, he meets with small applause ;
All turn where metal more attractive draws ;
The enamored striplings still delight to sip
The dews of love from beauty's rosy lip ;
The blushing fair still views, with secret joy,
The manly charms that grace her ardent boy ;
And as at heart the genial glow they feel,
Each quite forgets his great great grandchild's weal ;
And leaving him and Malthus in the lurch,
Hies to his bride and trips away to church.'

Our limits do not permit us to continue our extracts from this address, which terminates with the poem. We know not how extensive a popularity the poem can promise itself in this country, when, at this moment, our local politics are too interesting to leave a production, founded on European politics, much chance of wide circulation. Of the general merit of the poetry our readers can judge for themselves. It is quite above the ordinary level of similar compositions, and may be compared in some portions, not disadvantageously, with Mrs Barbauld's fine production of *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*. It is plain to see, that a little more care bestowed on the versification would have removed that excess of *pedestrian* ease, which we think it manifests. Should the author be induced to continue his performance, we trust he will give this hint a thought. It applies, however, only to the latter part of the poem.

ERRATA.

Page 362, last line, *dele* the stop at the end.

“ 375, 5th line, *for* ‘apside,’ *read* ‘apsis.’

“ 396, 1st “ “ ‘these,’ “ ‘those.’